

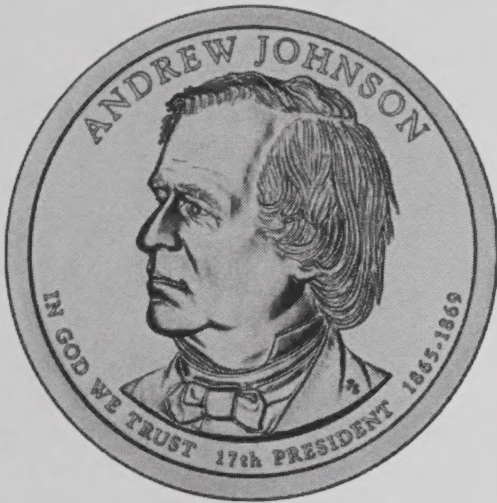


# MEMBERS EXCHANGE

Publication of the American Medallist Sculpture Association  
Web site: <http://www.amsamedals.org> ~ email: [info@amsamedals.org](mailto:info@amsamedals.org)

JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH 2011

## Plan now for summer seminars



*All 2011 Presidential Dollar coins  
designed by AMSA members,  
Page 7.*

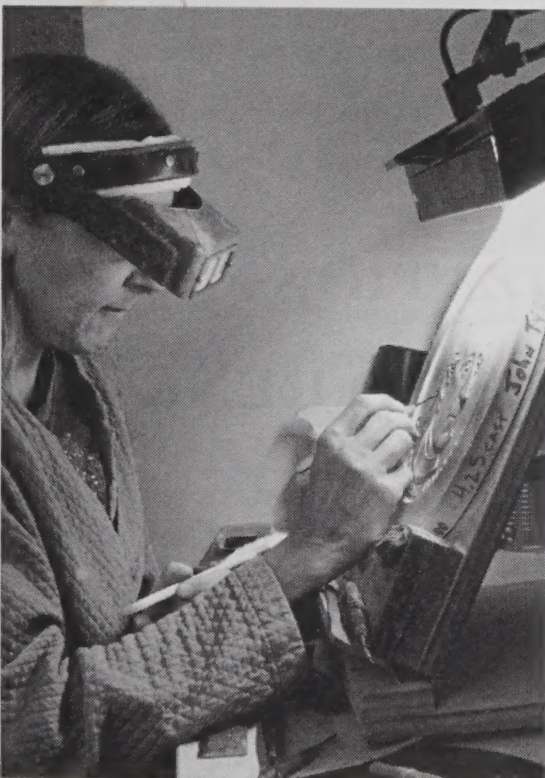


Photo © 2009 Andrew Perala  
Phebe Hemphill sculpting model for the 2009  
President John Tyler U.S. dollar coin at the  
Philadelphia Mint, February 2009.

**D**ear Friends and Members,

The first thing I would like to share with you is an update of information on the two-day American Medallist Sculpture Association-National Sculpture Society Medallist Sculpture Seminar set at Brookgreen Gardens, July 15-16, 2011.

We are still putting the complete roster and schedule together, but I can give you a general idea of the program now.

The opening day begins with opening remarks and a partial tour of the sculpture gardens, the current medal exhibit, and the exhibit "Art Medal - Past and Present," curated by Robin Salmon.

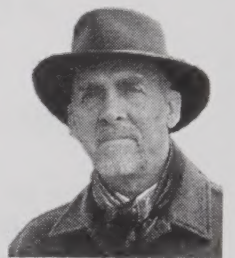
Brookgreen Gardens also maintains a permanent Medals collection at the Offner center (on site). The next day and a half will be devoted to talks, demonstrations, and mini-workshop activities.

One subject always of interest to all of us is patina techniques. In this issue Del Newbigging shares an unusual technique.

If any of you would like to demonstrate a patina technique or any other medallist technique that could be done in the course of an hour or so at the summer seminar, please contact me at [eugenedaub@cox.net](mailto:eugenedaub@cox.net).

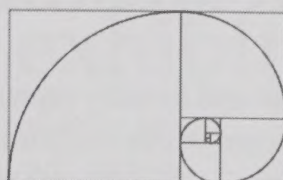
Brookgreen Gardens will be reserving a block of rooms for our seminar participants at the Litchfield Golf and Country Club.

I have stayed there many times and it is very comfortable and reasonably priced (even though summer is high season).



### President's Letter

*Continued on Page 3*



### *Inside:*

#### **AMSA Artist at work:**

At left, U.S. Mint  
Sculptor/Engraver  
Phebe  
Hemphill

⌘ *Del's patina technique*

⌘ *Scam targets artists*

⌘ *Wastweet's design blueprint for US Mint*

⌘ *Victor Ries, 103: 'Living National Treasure'*





**AMERICAN MEDALLIC SCULPTURE ASSOCIATION**  
**P.O. BOX 1201**  
**EDMONDS, WA 98020**

*General issues or questions: jacquelinelorieo@yahoo.com (Jackie Lorieo);*  
*AMSA Online issues: amsaonline@yahoo.es (Enrique Moreiro)*

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Andrew Perala, editor; P.O. Box 6626; Kamuela, Hawaii 96743; aperala@aol.com

The AMSA newsletter, "Members Exchange," is published quarterly and mailed to members whose membership fees are current. The editorial style for "Members Exchange" follows the guidelines of the *Associated Press Style Manual* for consistency and clarity. All submissions will be edited for style and content; however, it is not possible to verify every submitted statement as fact. Authors are responsible for verifying content; stating the source, whether necessary for that printed story or not, helps establish authority in research. The editor offers editorial direction to all authors with the entire story process: research, writing, editing, rewrites and more. High-resolution black and white photographs of medallic sculpture shot against a neutral background are appreciated. Include all necessary details: who, what, where, when, why, how much. Dimensions of medals essential. *Photos of artists at work are needed!* E-mail Andrew Perala, aperala@aol.com, for specific suggestions on how best to showcase your work!

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**JOIN OR RENEW!**  
**SUPPORT YOUR ORGANIZATION!**

**IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR MEMBERS TO RENEW!!**

Sculptors, collectors and dealers, museum curators, mint and foundry representatives, educator, writers, editors and researchers are members of AMSA. Membership benefits are worth much more than the modest amount we charge for annual fees. AMSA regularly schedules workshops, symposia, seminars are more for members. Exhibits of the work of AMSA medalists are booked in museums and galleries in the United States and abroad. Meetings, held during the non-summer months, provide opportunities for members to share insights and art with each other. Members receive the quarterly newsletter Members Exchange.

Membership is \$35 (U.S.) for U.S. and Canada members, \$20 (U.S.) for students. Foreign membership is \$45 (U.S.).

To join online, go to [http://www.amsamedals.org/frame\\_set\\_join\\_us.htm](http://www.amsamedals.org/frame_set_join_us.htm). Or write to: The American Medallic Sculpture Association, P.O. Box 1201, Edmonds, WA 98020.

***WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT, THE ORGANIZATION WILL NOT SURVIVE***

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# Brookgreen Gardens setting for 2-day AMSA, NSS July workshop



Photograph courtesy Brookgreen Gardens

The sculpture "Diana" by Augustus Saint Gaudens in the sculpture garden at Brookgreen.

*Continued from Page 1*

In July, I always see an alligator in the small lakes around the grounds.

You can get to Brookgreen by bike from the hotel in about 10 minutes (bikes are available at the hotel), or we can carpool.

The closest airport is Myrtle Beach; from there you can get to Brookgreen Gardens by shuttle or rental car.

It's about a 30 to 40 minute drive to Litchfield country club and a 5 minute drive from there to Brookgreen Gardens.

If you don't want to rent a car I'm sure we can carpool to restaurants in the evening, there are several in walking distance. The gardens are open in the evening. Brookgreen will be presenting live music in the gardens, a lucky coincidence for us. We are still organizing the event and very soon will have prices and an itinerary which we will get to you in several weeks.

This is shaping up to be a wonderful event to learn more about medals and share information, see old friends and meet new ones. If you have never been to Brookgreen Sculpture Gardens, you must go to their website. It's a magical place and you may want to stay an extra day or so to take it all in.

I hope to see you all there,  
Eugene Daub, President

**What:**  
Medallic  
Sculpture Seminar

**Where:**  
Brookgreen Gardens,  
1931 Brookgreen  
Drive, Murrells Inlet,  
SC 29576.

**When:**  
July 15-16, 2011.

**Presented by:**  
AMSA and NSS.  
Specific details to be  
announced in  
March, 2011.

## Brookgreen to exhibit AMSA medallic art

An exhibit of medallic art scheduled to run from May 7 to July 24, 2011, at Brookgreen Gardens will include works from members of the American Medallic Sculpture Association.

"I have contacted a number of AMSA members and will include their works in an upcoming exhibit, *The Art Medal: Past and Present*," said Robin Salmon, Vice-President for Collections and Curator of Sculpture at Brookgreen Gardens. Salmon made the public announcement on Feb. 28.

The exhibit will be on view in the Joseph Veach Noble Gallery at Brookgreen Gardens. *The Art Medal: Past and Present* also will "showcase the medallic art of several 19th and 20th century masters such as Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Karl Bitter, R. Tait McKenzie, Frederick MacMonnies, James Earle Fraser, Laura Gardin Fraser, Anna Hyatt Huntington, and Gertrude Lathrop, to name a few," Salmon said. As of press time (March 1), 17 of 30 AMSA members queried by Salmon had responded, with 38 medals submitted for the exhibit to date.



# Boxing champ, war hero Barney Ross honored on medal by Daub

*By Mel Wacks*

A combat hero in World War II, Barney Ross also was the first boxer to hold three world titles at the same time (World Lightweight and Junior Welterweight Champion 1933 to 1935 and World Welterweight Champion in 1934 and 1935 to 1938).

A medal honoring this great Jewish American has been sculpted by noted artist Eugene Daub.

The high relief Barney Ross medals, approximately two inches in size, are available in limited editions of bronze, pure silver, and gold-plated silver from The Jewish-American Hall of Fame, 5189 Jeffdale Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91364. To order or for further information contact [directorjahf@yahoo.com](mailto:directorjahf@yahoo.com).

Dov-Ber Rasofsky was born in Chicago on Dec. 23, 1909. When he was a 14-year old rabbinical student, his father — a rabbi — died in his arms after being shot in a robbery.

The tragic death caused his mother Sarah to suffer a nervous breakdown. As a result, his three younger siblings were placed in an orphanage or farmed out to other members of the extended family.

Dov and his two older brothers were left to their own devices. Dov began running around with local toughs, developing into a street brawler and small-time thief - at one point he worked for Al Capone.

Dov's goal was to earn enough money to buy a home so that he could reunite his family. Boxing turned out to be the vehicle to that success.

He changed his name to Barney Ross and went on to become a Golden Gloves champion and to eventu-



*Barney Ross working as an activist for Jewish causes and the creation of the nation of Israel after World War II.*

ally dominate the lighter professional divisions, earning the sobriquet "The Pride of the Ghetto."

At a time - the late 1920s and '30s - when rising Nazism was using propaganda to spread virulently anti-Jewish philosophy, Ross was seen by American Jews as one of their greatest advocates.

Ross was known as a smart fighter with tremendous stamina - hallmark trait: he was never knocked out in his boxing career.

Barney Ross has been inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame, the World Boxing Hall of Fame, the Chicagoland Sports Hall of Fame, the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame, and the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.

In his early thirties, after his boxing career had ended, Ross joined the United States Marine Corps.

The Marines wanted to keep him Stateside and use

*Continued*



# Guadalcanal hero overcame heroin, became activist

*Continued*

his celebrity status to boost morale.

Most of the athletes of the era like heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey had ceremonial roles in the military, but Ross insisted on doing more, fighting for his country.

The Marines are not known for denying a leatherneck the opportunity to die in combat for his country.

Ross was sent to Guadalcanal in the South Pacific, where one night, he and three other stretcher bearers along with a wounded man and two soldiers were trapped under enemy fire.

All his fellow Marines were wounded, as was Ross, but he was the only one able to fight.

Ross gathered his comrades' rifles and grenades and single-handedly fought nearly two dozen Japanese soldiers, killing them all by morning.

Two of the Marines had died in the battle, but Ross carried the remaining man on his shoulders to safety even though he outweighed Ross by nearly 100 pounds.

For his heroism in combat, Ross was awarded two Purple Hearts and America's third highest military honor, the Silver Star.

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving with a Marine Battalion in Guadalcanal Nov. 18-20, 1942," is inscribed on Ross' Jewish-American Hall of Fame medal.

The Silver Star medal inscription is joined with his own words: "The night I spent in that shell hole with five wounded leathernecks and two soldiers was by all odds the toughest round I've ever slugged through."

During his recovery at the hospital from his wounds he had received, Ross developed a habit for the morphine administered for pain.

Back in the States, the morphine became a heroin habit. Ross beat that too. After recovery, Ross gave numerous lectures to high school students about the dangers of drug addiction.

Ross' boxing career, World War II heroics, subse-



*Created and sculpted by Eugene Daub, the Barney Ross medal in bronze for the Jewish-American Hall of Fame measures approximately 50 millimeters wide by 40 millimeters high. The front portrays Ross in a fighter's stance; the reverse carries language of his award of the Silver Star for bravery and his own comments on the WWII battle for Guadalcanal.*

quent drug addiction and recovery were depicted in the 1957 film, "Monkey on My Back."

Early in 1948, Barney Ross signed up more than 2,000 volunteers to fight for the creation of a Jewish state, but the State Department refused to issue them passports.

Ross went on to raise money for the cause and even helped arrange for armaments to be sent to the Irgun.

When Ross died at the age of 57, his obituary in *The New York Times* noted: "A student of the Talmud who turned to prizefighting, Barney Ross was regarded as one of the toughest champions."

"Outside of the ring, moreover, his heroism on Guadalcanal and his victory over a narcotics habit brought him further recognition as a man who had never been knocked out and had never quit." ♦



# Sculptor, medalist Victor Ries, age 103, honored as 'Living National Treasure'

By Mel Wacks

On Dec. 7, 2010, California's Alameda County Board of Supervisors honored well-known medallic artist Victor Ries by declaring the 103-year-old Bay Area sculptor "a Living National Treasure."

Ries created the unique rounded trapezoidal shape of the Jewish-American Hall of Fame medals, and designed the medals honoring Rabbi Judah L. Magnes (1969) and the Touro Synagogue (1977).

The text of the official declaration honoring Ries reads, in part:

"Whereas, Victor Ries, a long-time Berkeley resident, celebrated his 103rd birthday on October 26, 2010.

"Whereas, Victor Ries was born in Berlin, Germany and developed his unique style, rooted in the Bauhaus tradition, with a deep appreciation of fine craftsmanship and respect for materials at prestigious German art academies; he escaped the rising nightmare in Nazi Germany by emigrating to Palestine, where his work captured the attention of famed international architect Eric Mendelsohn who commissioned him to design major works, and later encouraged Victor to emigrate again, this time to Northern California where he became a founding member of the legendary Pond Farm artists' colony in the early 1940s.

"Whereas, Victor Ries made a seminal contribution to modern liturgical metal arts and crafts in America; and many synagogues in the Bay Area and elsewhere are graced by his magnificent work: the grand scale narrative window screens depicting Jewish holidays at Temple Beth Abraham in Oakland are considered to be one of the finest examples of modern Jewish synagogue art in the world; he has also created hundreds of smaller works - from delicate jewelry, silverware, candlesticks, silver and ebony boxes to menorahs and shield plates for Torahs in synagogues.

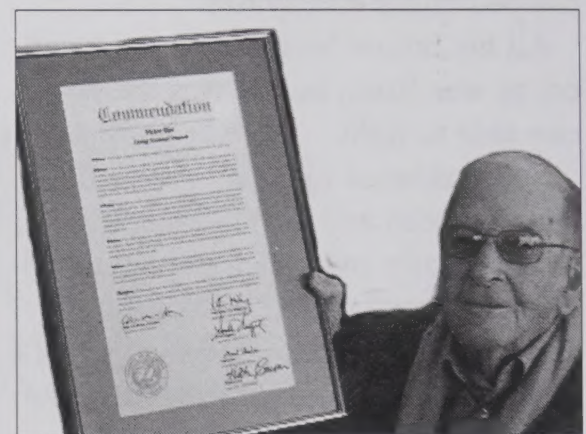
"Whereas Victor Ries has had one-man shows at the de Young and Legion of Honor museums in San Fran-

cisco, the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley, the Crocker Gallery in Sacramento, the Jewish Museum in New York, and - on the occasion of his 100th birthday - at the Jewish Heritage

Museum at the Reutlingers Center for Jewish Living in Danville, California.

"Whereas, Victor Ries has passed on his knowledge to future generations by teaching at the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, Saint Mary's College in Moraga, and the College of Marin in Kentfield; and was Artist-in-Residence at the Magnes Museum, where he created their distinctive gate and the unique shape of the Jewish-American Hall of Fame series of medals.

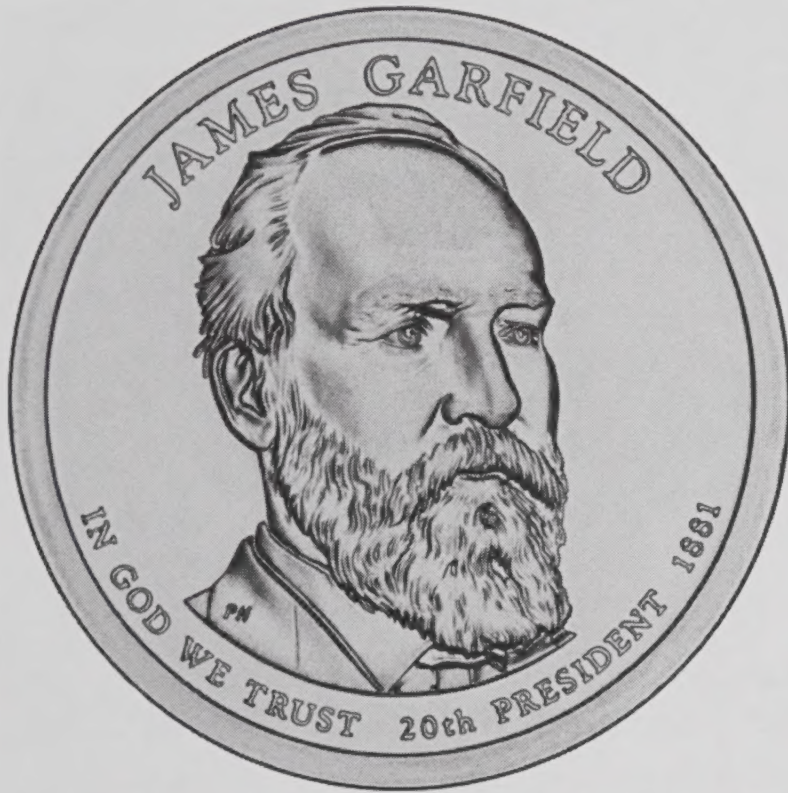
"Therefore, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, on December 7, 2010, does commend Victor Ries for a lifetime of artistic accomplishments shared with Alameda County residents, and express great appreciation for making the County of Alameda a better place in which to live, and extend its best wishes for continued good health in the future." □



*Victor Ries holds his commendation as a "Living National Treasure" honoring his many decades in sculpture and the medallic arts. Top, his 1969 medal honoring Rabbi Judah L. Magnes.*

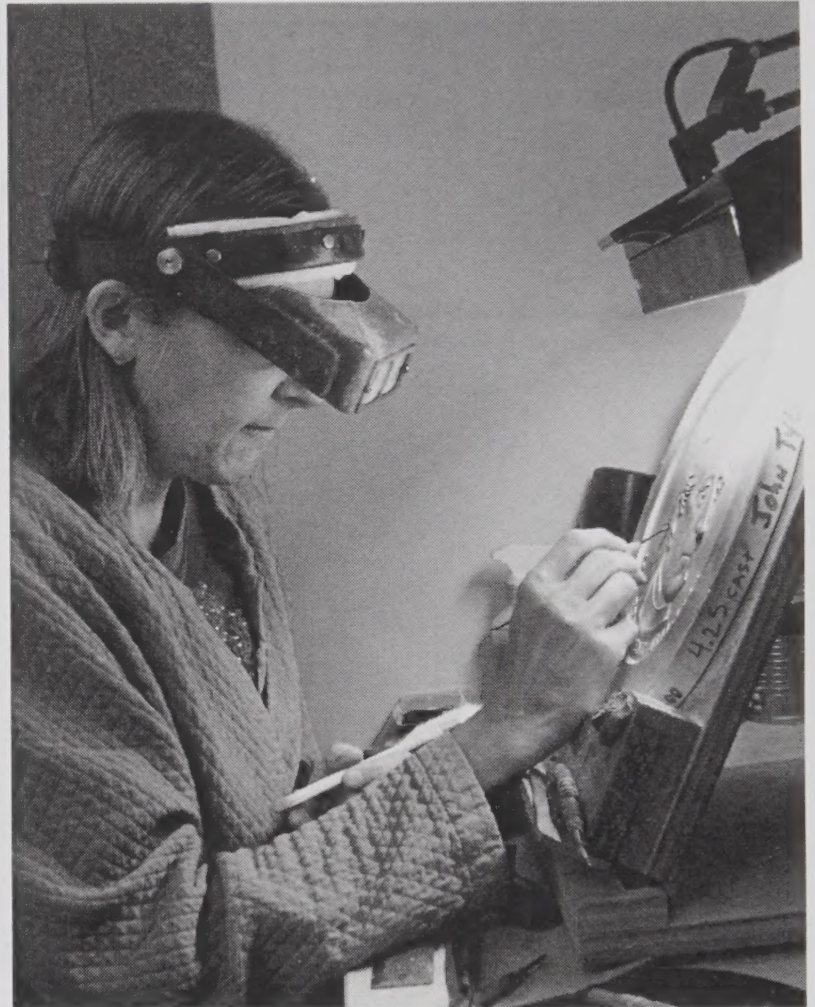


# AMSA members design all 2011 U.S. Presidential \$1 coins



Coin images courtesy United States Mint; Phebe Hemphill photo © Andrew Perala

Attention to detail is evident in the concentration of United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver Phebe Hemphill, right, as she works on the cast model for the 2009 John Tyler Presidential \$1 coin. Hemphill designed and engraved the Tyler coin's obverse. The obverse of the 2011 Andrew Johnson Presidential \$1 coin, below right, was designed and sculpted by United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver Don Everhart. Hemphill designed and sculpted the obverse of the 2011 James Garfield Presidential \$1 coin, above.



**All** four U.S. President dollar coins to be issued in 2011 were designed and sculpted by AMSA members - and full-time Sculptor-Engravers for the United States Mint - Phebe Hemphill and Don Everhart.

The four Presidential dollar coins to be issued in 2011 portray the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th Presidents of the United States: Andrew Johnson, Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes and James Garfield.

The coins are issued in both circulating and Proof types, with the Proof coins available as a set from the U.S. Mint ([www.usmint.gov](http://www.usmint.gov)).

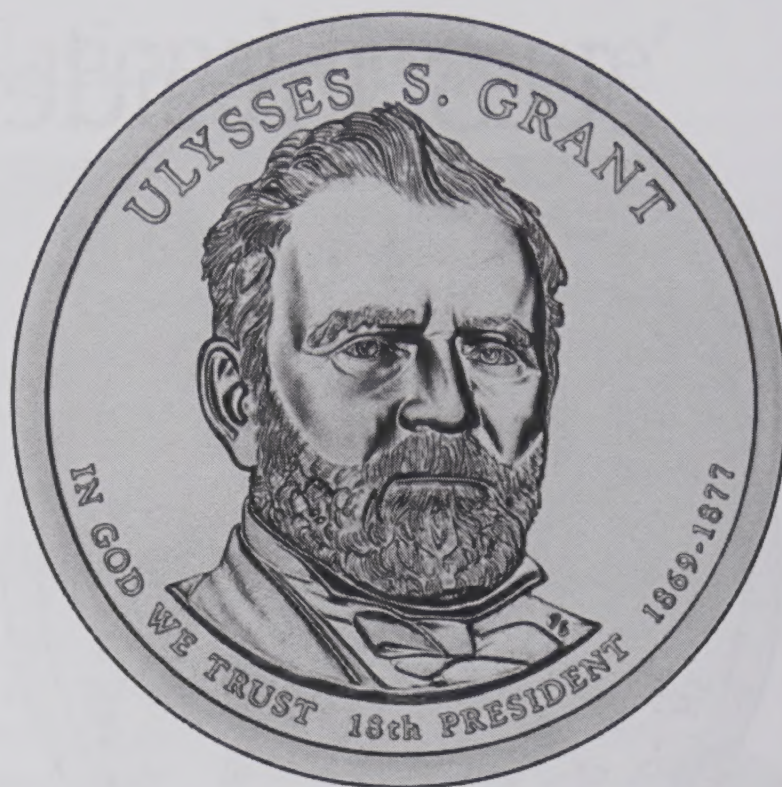
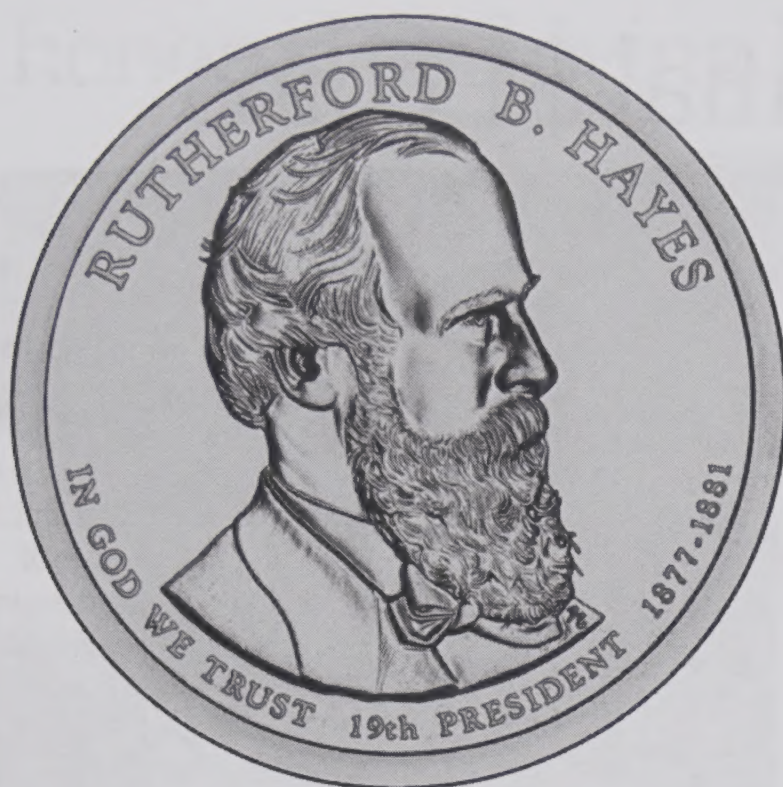
Circulating dollar coins will be issued every three months in 2001; The Andrew Johnson coins were released into



Continued



# Everhart, Hemphill design, engrave U.S. coins, medals



*Images courtesy United States Mint*

*One-dollar coins scheduled for release into circulation into 2011 include Ulysses S. Grant, 18th President of the United States, above right, and Rutherford B. Hayes, 19th President, above left. AMSA member Don Everhart designed and sculpted both obverses.*

*Continued*

circulation in late February. The Ulysses S. Grant circulating coins will be issued into circulation in May, 2011. The Rutherford B. Hayes circulating coins will be released into circulation in August. The James Garfield circulating \$1 Presidential coins, which will conclude the 2011 Presidential \$1 coin releases, will be released into circulation in November, 2011.

A Past President of the American Medallist Sculpture Association (1993-1994), AMSA member Everhart has worked as a United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver for the past seven years.

Prior to joining the US Mint, Everhart worked for the Franklin Mint for five years. He left that firm in 1980 for a successful freelance sculptor career before joining the team of eight full-time United States Mint Sculptor-Engravers.

AMSA member Phebe Hemphill has worked as a full-time United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver since 2006, following a 15-year career at the Franklin Mint.

(Fellow AMSA member Jim Licaretz, who also is a Past President of AMSA, is also a full-time Sculptor-Engraver at the United States Mint.)

All sculptor-engravers work at the Philadelphia Mint.

(Some, like Medallist Sculptor Joseph Menna, have slightly different job titles and responsibilities).

The process of designing and sculpting circulating and commemorative coins, as well as commemorative medals, for the United States Mint is fairly lengthy before a final design decision is made.

"All the Engravers and the outside artists compete for every design that comes out of the US Mint," Everhart said via a recent e-mail exchange.

"Outside" artists include the five Master Designers of the Mint's Artistic Infusion Program (AIP) and 10 Associate Designers in the AIP.

Once all designs are submitted, two committees meeting in Washington, D.C. make recommendations "on all the designs we do," Everhart said. The two, The Committee for Fine Art and the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee, make their recommendations to the Secretary of the Treasury for final selection.

## The Digital Age

When Everhart first joined the Mint, all his drawings were done by hand, on paper. But that has changed. For the 2010 Abraham Lincoln Presidential \$1 coin, Everhart used a new drawing tool

"I did the (Lincoln) drawing on a Wacom tablet, kind of like a (portable computer) monitor that you draw on. The



# Time length of design-to-engraved process varies greatly



*Images courtesy United States Mint/Don Everhart*

*U.S. Mint sculptor-engraver Don Everhart, above, while working through the design and sculpting phases of the 2010 Abraham Lincoln President dollar coin. Capturing the burden of the President's office was a huge challenge in creating the Lincoln portrait, Everhart said.*

drawing turned out very well. It was the first time I had used a Wacom and I took to it immediately.

"In fact I don't draw on paper anymore, all my designing is done on the computer."

When Everhart's proposed design for the 2010 Lincoln Presidential \$1 coin was selected, "I was given the go ahead to begin sculpting.

"I began the sculpture on an eight-inch diameter basin, the standard size we use for all circulating and commemorative coins. I roughed the portrait in with a hard medallion plasti-

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***"All my designing  
is done on  
the computer."  
- Don Everhart***

---

cine, and when I was satisfied with the level of detail I made a plaster casting of it. I worked a bit in the negative plaster then cast it again into a positive, where I finished it off.

"The design stage took about a day and the plaster took me about a week to finish. Of course some projects take considerably longer than this."

"On portraits, capturing the essence of the subject in sculpture is the challenge.

With Lincoln, my goal was to show the intensity of his gaze and also try to convey some of the burden the man carried for most of his presidency.

"I think the most rewarding parts of the process are having a design chosen and then, finally seeing it in metal." φ



# Skepticism protects AMSA member from scam artist seeking thousands

I recently received an e-mail from a man who said he saw my work on my web page and wanted to buy one of my medals.

We exchanged e-mails to agree on a price.

He said that he would FedEx a Cashier's Check to me in a day or so, and when it cleared my account he would tell me how he planned to pick up the medal. I agreed.

The next day he told me that he had made arrangements with a friend to pick up the medal after he received word that the check had cleared.

The following day he e-mailed that he had included money in the check to cover the expenses of his friend. He asked if I would deposit the check and when it cleared, send the balance of the money to his friend after I had taken out the amount for the medal.

A couple of hours later he e-mailed to say the check would arrive by FedEx the following day.

When the check arrived, I saw that it had been made out for \$2,000 above the price of my medal.

I immediately knew something was up. I made copies of all my correspondence with the man and took it with the check to the manager of my bank.

The manager told me that the check was a fake. To confirm her hunch, she called the bank the check was drawn on.

The manager was told that the account number on the check and the names printed at the top of the check were in fact accurate for one



*The St. George medal by Linda Preble-McVay*

of their customers but that no checks had ever been drawn on that account.

Further, a closer look at the check showed that the name of the bank was not precisely accurate.

I had not noticed.

The check paper was indeed the bank type and to the untrained eye, all looked well.

The manager said that if I had deposited the check and the teller did not suspect anything, it would be shown as cleared in my account the following day and until the bank actually tried to collect the funds from the issuing bank, I would

have thought all was well and sent the money to his friend.

My account would have been charged to cover the \$2,000 after I had sent the money off.

She said that the man had probably targeted many people at once and if only a handful took the bait, he would have made a considerable amount of money.

The manager made copies of the correspondence and the check for the issuing bank and the police department.

The police told me that this is a very common thing and unfortunately, too many people trust the correspondence.

I am passing this on to put everyone on the alert. Please send it on to other people you know.

Thank you,  
Linda Preble McVay

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***'My account  
would have  
been charged  
\$2,000.'***

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# Table wine's perfect finish

*Patina recipe for bronze medals calls for cheap red wine*

By Del Newbigging

While attending the FIDEM Congress in Tampere, Finland I met Lindley Briggs, a talented medallist from Newburyport, Mass.

I admired her exhibited medals and told her I was especially impressed with the lustrous patina of the medals.

Without a hint of secrecy, and with great generosity she told me how to do the patina. She has given me her permission to pass this method on to you.

There are five steps to achieving a Red Wine Patina (see recipe at right). The essentials are this: sandblast the medal, marinate it in red wine for about two weeks, turning occasionally. Remove the medal, dry and lightly burnish. Then finish with a light coat of wax, then polish.

My next problem was that my medal needed to be sandblasted and I did not have any way to do this.

I asked for help from Florance Tsai, the First Prize winner of the Medallic Art Society of Canada Student Medal Competition 2010 and a graduating student from Central Technical School in Toronto. I was hopeful that she would take my medal into the school and sandblast it for me. She told me that the school did not have a method to sandblast. Instead of sandblasting the school has the students use a vinegar bath on their medals.

## Vinegar Bath Alternative to Sandblasting

Mix white vinegar and water, half and half. Soak the medal in the bath for 20 minutes and then brush the medal with a wire brush.

Some medals need to be left in the vinegar solution for a longer period. With all of this help from my friends I soaked the medal in the vinegar bath (it came out clean and golden) and placed it in the red wine for a couple of weeks. The result was a beautiful, soft patina finish.

I encourage you to try this method. I would also

encourage you to write your own tricks and send them in to the editor to share with all of us. Your creativity belongs solely to you but the tricks we have learned can be shared with everybody. ♢

## RED WINE PATINA

1. SANDBLAST THE MEDAL
2. PLACE THE MEDAL IN A GLASS CONTAINER AND COVER IT WITH A CHEAP RED WINE.
3. ALLOW THE MEDAL TO REST IN THE WINE FOR TWO WEEKS, TURNING IT OCCASIONALLY.
4. REMOVE THE MEDAL, DRY IT AND LIGHTLY BURNISH.
5. FINISH WITH A LIGHT COAT OF WAX AND POLISH

*Medals by Lindley Briggs given the "red wine patina" treatment include "The Arrival," above left, 125mm x 150mm, cast, bronze, 2009; and "Soul in Flight," below, 125mm x 20mm, cast, bronze, 2009.*





# Recreating JFK: Spindler's medallic tale

By Warren Spindler

January 2011 marks the 50th anniversary of the inauguration of John F. Kennedy as the 35th president of the United States. Kennedy ended his inaugural address with these words:

"Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own." President John F. Kennedy - January 20, 1961

Last year, I was asked to sculpt a replica of the Gilroy Roberts and Frank Gasparro fifty-cent piece by The Franklin Mint.

This silver medal was initially created for a company in Germany, it is now available in the U.S. The size is approximately 3" in diameter.

I was very honored to receive and complete this sculpture assignment. The lettering on the medal was engraved into the hub by the Bex Mint who was responsible for the tooling.

The original creators of this masterpiece, Gilroy Roberts, the sculptor of the Kennedy portrait on the obverse, was the 9th Chief Engraver of the U.S. Mint and Frank Gasparro, who painstakingly re-created the presidential seal on the reverse, was the 10th Chief Engraver of the U.S. Mint. Both of these gentlemen were the grand masters of the sculptors and engravers of their time.

This bring a story to mind...

My honorable grandfather devoutly collected the North American bird coins sculpted by Gilroy Roberts and struck in silver by the Franklin Mint. I fondly re-



*A medal and model recreating the iconic image of JFK on the 1964 U.S. half-dollar by AMSA member Warren Spindler.*

member him sharing the newest coin of his collection with me. They were beautiful and he was very proud of his collection.

I do not know why I said this but I do recall saying to him "... who knows Pop, someday I might create a coin for The Franklin Mint ..."

I studied sculpture in college but it was the late seventies, at the time I was working as a museum exhibit designer in Philadelphia.

Various twists and turns of my career allowed me to eventually make my "long shot" statement turn out to be true! My grandfather would have been very pleased. To see more work from my portfolio visit my website at [www.artlab3.net](http://www.artlab3.net). ☐

## Fortson's sculpture exhibit

Clay sculptures by Lois Fortson, a new member of AMSA, were part of a recent exhibit at the Troy-Hayner Cultural Center in Troy, Ohio.

Five artists participated in the two-month exhibit, "A Study of People," which ran from Jan. 9 to Feb. 27, 2011. The four other artists exhibited oil paintings, watercolors, photographs and fabric dolls of important African-Americans, all exploring "people from different cultures and walks of life."

Fortson is from nearby Dayton and has been sculpting for 30 years. She's studied with Eugene Daub and Bing Davis and has works in permanent collections in Dayton.

A retired pastor with the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church, Fortson's work can be seen online at [www.fortsonsculptures.com](http://www.fortsonsculptures.com). ☐



# Wastweet recommends medal design parameters to US Mint committee

By Tone Ørvik

Heidi Wastweet, medal sculptor in Seattle and active, long-standing member of AMSA, was chosen to join The Citizens' Coinage Advisory Committee (CCAC) from 2010 to 2014. She is the only medallic artist on the committee.

The CCAC has the mandate to evaluate and recommend designs for coins and medals by the United States Mint.

Since Congress established the CCAC in 2003, the Committee has been calling for a revival of medallic art, a "renaissance" in coin design to improve the quality of both art and design.

The Committee looks to Wastweet for technical input as well as expertise in medallic sculpture. Her experience includes 11 years at the private Sunshine Mint in Idaho, where she was involved in every part of production. Since 2000, she has worked as an independent sculptor of medals, coins, and bas reliefs.

One of her recent public commissions was the Medal of Honor Monument at the University of Washington (with Mike Magrath).

The Committee asked Wastweet to help establish benchmarks for good design. She asked the nine other members

to select their favorite coins – any coin from any country and period. The results were released at a CCAC public forum in Denver in July 2010.

[Ed. Note: The 59-page report *A Blueprint for Advancing Artistic Creativity and Excellence in U.S. Coins and Medals* is available online at <http://www.ccac.gov/aboutUs/SpecialReports.cfm>. The report heavily faults the U.S. Treasury Department's cumbersome and Mint-marketing

dominated process of selecting coin and medal designs.]

Wastweet's favorite coins come from Latvia, Poland and Italy, countries with a long tradition of educating sculptors in bas relief. (The 100-year-old Scuola dell'arte della Medaglia in Rome is unique in the world for educating medallic sculptors specifically for the national (Italian) Mint.

Wastweet says that the U.S. is falling behind the rest of the world. There is hardly any art school in the U.S. that teaches relief, though the interest in bas relief is very much alive in the States and there are sculptors and students eager to take on the art form. Wastweet hopes to see a

revival in both the education and appreciation of this area of sculpture.

**Ørvik:** What is good medallic art and design?

**Wastweet:** The Committee members agree that they wish for more modern designs in coins. The U.S. coins

## CHARACTERISTICS OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE

- φ Use of texture and pattern
- φ Meaningful negative space
- φ Thoughtful relationship of negative to positive space
- φ Stylization
- φ Ethnical influences
- φ Allegory and symbolism
- φ Detail yes, crowding no
- φ Use of perspective
- φ Use of forced perspective
- φ Minimal layers
- φ Harmonious, restrained type styles
- φ Clarity
- φ Interwoven images, not busy collages
- φ Contrast of texture and smooth
- φ Fluidity
- φ Subtlety
- φ Relevance of obverse to reverse

- Heidi Wastweet

Continued



# Design selection process heavily faulted

*Continued*

are considered by many to be boring and stuck in a historical tradition.

By U.S. law a national coin cannot depict a living person, though medals issued by the U.S. Mint can portray people who are living, for instance the recent Arnold Palmer medal.

In this ongoing discussion about quality and artistic excellence, some considerations have become clear: Like ancient coin designs which were powerful, bold and subtle, yet clear and simplified, our modern coin designs should seek simplicity without being simplistic. Too much layering does not translate well into coin format. It is also visually disturbing when a coin is too busy, with too many details.

**Ørvik:** How do CAD-made designs compare to designs created by a sculptor? With CAD programs, reliefs can be made from simple photographs.

**Wastweet:** CAD is great for showing buildings and cars, for example, but for organic subjects too much is missing from a coin design made by CAD: The subtleties, the texture, the lack of “happy accidents,” and more importantly, the essential character that only a sculptor can interpret and express (are missing).

**Ørvik:** Who cares about coins and medals?

**Wastweet:** Clearly the collectors care about coins and medals. The numismatic collectors are mostly interested in rarities, misstrikes and pretty coins, while the art medal collectors delight in recognizable, known medals, and seek a high aesthetic quality.

**Ørvik:** Do people in general recognize that coins can be objects of art and beauty? Did people notice the new reverse to the penny, for example?



*Clockwise from top:*

*1932 US \$10 gold Eagle obverse image courtesy Stack's;  
1998 Lithuania 10 litas image courtesy Bank of Lithuania;  
2009 US Puerto Rico quarter image courtesy U.S. Mint.*

*Modern coin designs incorporating ideals of good design as suggested by Heidi Wastweet or The Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee: Wastweet's ideal of good design on Augustus Saint Gauden's \$10 U.S. gold Eagle; and two CCAC selections: a 1998 Lithuania 10 litas commemorative honoring the capital city of Vilnius; the 2009 U.S. Commonwealth of Puerto Rico territory quarter with its sentry cu-pola or garita on San Juan's iconic El Morro Fort.*

**Wastweet:** No, they don't. If our coins weren't so boring, people would be more interested. The Canadian one dollar coin, endearingly named “the Loonie” has a simple, beautiful design of a loon. A nation's money is its calling card. It's a matter of national identity, but U.S. coins show nothing of our artistic culture. Our coins are our face to the world; they literally touch everyone who comes to this country. Which other item does every visitor touch? The \$10 gold eagle, designed by Augustus St. Gaudens, has an iconic image of Liberty on its obverse.

In recent years the Sacagawea is one instance where a nationally respected sculptor (Glenna Goodacre) created a national coin. We have amazing artists who have not been used. What if we used Jamie Wyeth or Chuck Close to design our national coins? Perhaps that would stir the public's interest in the art in our pocket. ¢

*Heidi Wastweet: [www.wastweetstudio.com](http://www.wastweetstudio.com)*

*The Citizens' Coinage Advisory Committee: [www.ccac.gov](http://www.ccac.gov); The Italian School for Medalllic Art: [www.sam.ipzs.it/english.jsp](http://www.sam.ipzs.it/english.jsp)*

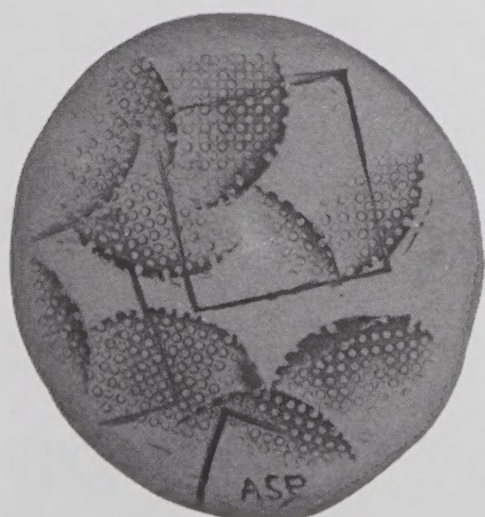
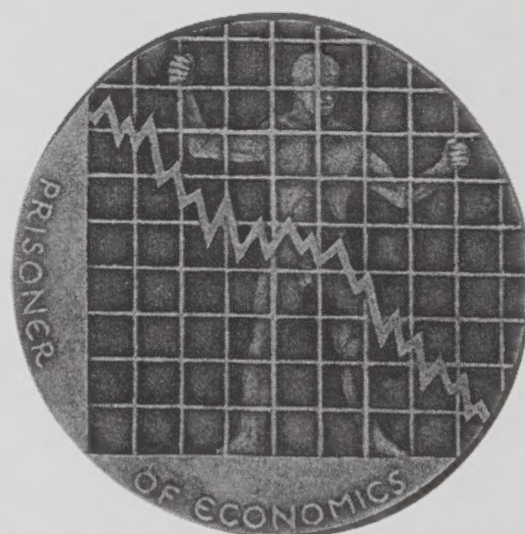


# Recent medals of AMSA members, other sculptors



*Clockwise, from top:*

- Lois Fortson, Unnamed, clay bas-relief, from "A Study of People" exhibited at Troy-Hayner Center, Troy, OH.;
- Ron Dutton (Great Britain), DARK TOWER (2010), bronze, 95 mm, exhibited recently at Medialia Rack and Hamper Gallery;
- Nathaniel Butler (USA), CHANGE OF STATE (2010W), penny, watch face, nail, 21 mm, exhibited at Medialia.
- Michael Meszaros (Australia), PRISONER OF ECONOMICS, editioned, bronze, 113 mm. exhibited at Medialia.
- John Strawbridge, GUNNERY WOMEN'S CREW captain's medal created for the 160-year-old Connecticut private school The Gunnery;
- Consuelo de la Cuadra (Spain), AMANECER : CARAY CRUZ (2010), bronze, 40 mm, exhibited at Medialia.
- Ann Shaper Pollack (USA), MARS - THE RED PLANET (2010), unique, clay, 70 mm, exhibited at Medialia.





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